



***United States Attorney
District of New Jersey***

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February 15, 2011

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**GRAPE STREET CRIPS STREET GANG MEMBER
PLEADS GUILTY TO CRACK COCAINE CONSPIRACY**

NEWARK, N.J. – A member of the Grape Street Crips criminal street gang admitted today to his role in a Newark-based crack cocaine distribution conspiracy, United States Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

Rasheed Smith, a/k/a “Weed,” 20, of Newark, pleaded guilty to a superseding Information charging one count of conspiracy to distribute crack cocaine. Smith entered his guilty plea before United States District Judge Stanley R. Chesler in Newark federal court.

According to documents filed in this case and statements made in court:

Rasheed Smith, along with fellow gang member Marquis Works and associate Stevie Buckuse, a/k/a “Black,” conspired to distribute almost 200 grams of crack cocaine in Newark. Smith admitted to making arrangements, at the Hyatt Court housing community, with an individual to whom the conspirators made two sales. Those sales were monitored by law enforcement.

On November 4, 2010, Works appeared before Judge Chesler and pleaded guilty to an Information charging him with distribution and possession with intent to distribute crack cocaine. Magistrate Judge Esther Salas issued a bench warrant for Works’ arrest when he failed to appear for a bail review hearing. He remains at large.

Trial for Buckuse is currently scheduled to begin on June 7, 2011.

Smith faces a minimum potential penalty of five years in prison, and a maximum potential penalty of 40 years in prison and a \$2 million fine – as well as any restitution as ordered by the Court. Sentencing is scheduled for May 24, 2011.

U.S. Attorney Fishman credited special agents of the FBI, under the direction of Special Agent In Charge Michael B. Ward in Newark, for the investigation leading to today’s guilty plea.

The government is represented by Assistant United States Attorney Rodney Villazor of the U.S. Attorney’s Office Criminal Division in Newark.

As for Buckuse, the charges and allegations contained in the Indictment are merely accusations, and the defendant is considered innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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Defense counsel: Lauire Fierro, Esq., Kinnelon, N.J.